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OFFICE OF TRAINING

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COURSE: Phase I - Orientation

SUBJECT: Intelligence and Foreign Policy HOURS: 1

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Intelligence and Foreign Policy

I would like to take as my text this afternoon a couple of sentences that were spoken by Vice President Nixon, before a group of CIA intelligence officers a few weeks ago. He said, "The objectives for an affirmative foreign policy can be attained only by the support which policy makers receive from you. I speak now as a member of the Administration and as a member of the National Security Council, which is the greatest consumer of your product, to emphasize that knowledge of the facts is essential if we are to make the right decisions - essentially that is why we have to have intelligence." I'd like to talk to you a little while this afternoon about this matter of the relationship between Intelligence and Foreign Policy. My remarks will be related particularly to the National Security Council as the principal consumer of our product.

Now it seems to me that there are three things that the NSC as a corporate body and its individual members from the President through the Secretaries and various Directors of Agencies expect from an Agency like CIA. In the first place, they expect us to warn them of any surprise which would jeopardize the security of the United States. You might call this the Pearl Harbor function. We are in a sense a great radar screen trying to protect the country not only from military surprise but also surprise of a political or diplomatic character - a surprise which would seriously damage our security interests. That's one thing they expect of us. They want to be warned in advance.

Secondly, they want us to maintain a permanent inventory of capabilities, vulnerabilities, and intentions of all foreign countries:

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potential enemies, our allies, uncommitted countries, neutral, or on the fence. They want to be sure that somebody is constantly collecting information, analyzing it, filing it away in usable form, on all foreign situations in which we could have a security interest; and the interests of the U. S. are now so broad and so deep that that means almost any foreign situation that you can imagine.

The third thing that they expect from us is specific support for the formulation and execution of foreign policy. They expect us to analyze and estimate situations for which they have to devise policy for the U. S. Now besides these there are other jobs that we do but I think our main functions fall within those three categories. Those are the things the NSC looks to CIA to perform.

I'd like to talk particularly about that third one: the analysis of foreign situations, preparation of estimates, that are necessary for the formulation and execution of foreign policy. In what ways can we perform that function?

Well, in the first place we estimate foreign situations that call for new or amended policy. We are constantly watching the foreign scene. We should see developing situations which are going to require action by our policy makers: a threatening situation developing in Iran, a change of the situation in West Germany that's going to require a change in policy, unstable or unsettled conditions developing in some Latin American country that will have adverse effects upon American interests and will have to be countered in some way by American policy. That's one thing we should be doing, constantly locating or noticing these situations and estimating what their nature is so that new or amended policy can be

developed.

Then secondly, we can estimate the probable results of various courses of action that might be pursued. It is possible then for intelligence to estimate the probable results of pursuing these various courses of action. This estimation is not restricted to the country or area toward which the policy will be directed but also includes secondary effects upon other countries. A policy that we pursue, for example, toward Egypt, has repercussions upon other countries in the middle East. It has repercussions upon our allies in Western Europe, and in many ways it may establish precedents that have effects circling the globe. So intelligence has a job of estimating the probable results of these various courses of action.

The third thing we can do is to report on and estimate the effects of policy that's been adopted. Our policy makers have selected a line to pursue against country A. After a time, intelligence can see what the effects of that policy have been in country A and report upon it.

These three things that I've mentioned here are being done at all levels of this Agency. The Director of Central Intelligence, in his meetings with the President, and with the NSC, is doing one or two or three of these things. At the policy board level of the NSC the Deputy Director is performing the job. At lower or working levels, other officers are doing it. We're performing it in the National Intelligence Estimates which we prepare. We're doing it also in reports on economic conditions that may come from the Office of Research and Reports, we're doing it on scientific matters from the Office of Scientific Intelligence, and from other producing parts of the Agency.

I'd like now to set out for you what would be an ideal relationship between policy making at these high and rarified levels and intelligence as produced by CIA. I call this ideal because it's rarely met in practice but it is the sort of relationship toward which we are striving. There are a number of steps that ought to occur if intelligence makes its best contribution to policy making.

The first of those steps would be to provide the policy makers with an estimate of the situation that they were going to deal with in their policy making. Before the policy makers start putting down courses of action that they expect to follow, they ought to know as thoroughly as intelligence can tell them what the situation is they're going to have to deal with. Thus, if a situation develops in Iran that's inimical to American interests, before we start developing policy toward Iran let's examine that situation thoroughly. What is the political situation? What's the economic situation? What military forces are involved? What in sum total is the situation there that bears upon American security?

Well, having provided the policy maker with an estimate of the situation, the second thing that should happen is for the policy maker to go to work to draft up his courses of action. He knows now what the situation is. Let's see what the U. S. can do about this situation to promote our interests. The policy maker should be aware of what our capabilities are, what we have in terms of economic resources, what we have in terms of diplomatic and political power, what we have in terms of military resources, etc. Those are the things that he can utilize and deploy to help the situation develop in our favor. So he proceeds to draft up his policy.

The next step, the third one, is for intelligence to take these proposed courses of action and to estimate their probable consequences. You propose, Mr. Policy Maker, to give this country 50 million dollars in economic aid. Is that a realistic proposal in terms of what we know about that country? Most countries would, of course, enjoy getting all the economic aid that we can find in our Treasury to give them. But in many cases it's quite unrealistic to propose that. They don't have the governmental and administrative machinery to utilize it. They don't have the trained technicians who could be employed. Many countries where we have high security interests are relatively primitive in terms of modern military equipment, but if you have a very poor military establishment where perhaps 50 to 75% of all the enlisted men in the Army are illiterate and many of the officers have only the most elementary educations, giving a country of that kind elaborate and complicated military equipment would be a pure waste of money, and perhaps (even more dangerous) it might fall into the hands of enemies or potential enemies instead of friends. Well, the courses of action can be set out and their probable results can be estimated on the basis of what we know.

The next step is for the policy makers to adopt what seemed to be the most realistic lines of action. Now some of the courses of action which they propose may not have been very seriously considered by them. It's not necessary that they tell the intelligence people they have six courses of action but only three of them are under serious consideration. We can go ahead and estimate on all six, and they can then make their selection on the basis of what they know of our own capabilities and resources and what we tell them from an intelligence point of view. Well, they choose what they think

are the most realistic of these courses of action and they become the policy of the U. S. in this situation.

Then we come to another step and that is for intelligence to estimate the effects of policy that has been put into effect by the operating agencies of our government.

Well now, these steps that I have set forth here are the ones that we have been attempting to approach as CIA and the NSC deal with these very large policy matters facing our government. We try to produce, for the NSC members, an estimate of the situation when they are going to take up a policy matter. If they are going to deal with Southeast Asia, we try to produce an estimate right up to date on Southeast Asia. When the Department that has been charged with producing a policy statement brings in the proposed courses of action, we try then to produce another estimate giving the probable reactions to these courses of action. And finally, we attempt later on to review the situation in the country and see what the effects of the policy have been upon that situation.

I have called this an ideal relationship. You may ask why it doesn't work that way if it seems reasonable to everybody. Well, there are two reasons we can give why it doesn't work out too well in practice, and why it still remains something of an ideal. The first of these is the time problem. If policy questions arose at a leisurely rate, and no one was forced to act too quickly on them, we could probably follow this schedule without much trouble. But certainly in the last few years, we've had things pop up here and there and most of the time of the policy makers has been spent

in fighting fires rather than in looking over the world to see where there might be inflammable material and trying to anticipate conflagrations. It takes quite a while to produce an important intelligence estimate. It can't be just picked out of a drawer and sent over in a few hours time. Its necessary to get from the policy makers the exact terms of reference that they're interested in. What is the situation as they visualize it? What are the questions they want Intelligence to answer? What ones are they going to ask that we can answer? Just what do they want in terms of scope? What time are they interested in? Is it a policy for the next three months or is it a policy for the next five years? After we get that, we may have a collection problem on our hands and sometimes collection is a long devious business as I'm sure you're soon to learn. Even without a collection problem, there's the matter of getting the various agencies that produce intelligence to work on this problem, to bring their products together, produce a coordinated intelligence estimate, have it agreed to all around and finally go through the mechanics of reproduction and distribution to the members of the NSC. Even with good luck, it usually takes three to five weeks to produce a National Intelligence Estimate. It can be done quicker and sometimes is; but I don't believe the producers would say that they are too well satisfied with the product turned out in that speed. So we're constantly faced with this matter of getting lead time on the policy makers, and trying to anticipate as far in advance as we can just what their needs are going to be and how we best can meet them.

The second thing that militates against the achievement of this ideal is the poor coordination which often exists between policy and intelligence staffs. Part of this is just a matter of the size and cumbersomeness of our government.

We are all in big agencies which move slowly and rather ponderously, and it's always hard to find just who the right person is for the right problem at the right time and so forth. Another difficulty is a certain suspicion that has always existed between the two. If any of you have had service in the Army, you know that sometimes good relations have not existed between the G-2 and G-3 elements. The G-3 elements think that intelligence wants to know things it has no business to know, things that are operational problems; and the intelligence people are suspicious sometimes of the plans and operations staff. To some extent that's existed throughout the whole intelligence and operating mechanism of our government. It is being rapidly dissipated, I think in the NSC machinery; there the intelligence people are closely coordinated with the policy people. But when you get outside the immediate machinery, you sometimes run into this difficulty, and it prevents the realization of the ideal that I have been speaking about.

Well now, what can we do as intelligence officers or people working in intelligence to further the realization of this proper and certainly, I think, wholesome relationship? Well, I think there are two things that we should bear in mind: The first one is, we want constantly to have a sense of alertness, of keenness toward the needs of the policy makers. The intelligence we produce is not for our own enlightment. I think intelligence agencies sometimes think that they turn this stuff out to pass around so that everybody can know these deep and dark secrets but without much realization that the product is not for us. It's for policymaking, for operating officers. And unless we keep that constantly in our mind, we are going to further this relationship.

Under this heading of alertness or keenness to meet their needs and desires, it's up to us to organize our work to meet their requirements. We ought to maintain a capacity to undertake new jobs, emergency work, special assignments, whenever those are thrust at us. That's chiefly a matter of the directing staffs, planning officers of the agency to see that we don't get so bogged down in current work that we have no capacity, no flexibility, with which to meet the needs of policy makers.

The next thing under this heading of alertness that I would put is to answer the questions that the policy makers are interested in. A lot of intelligence fails because it doesn't quite ring the bell. It may satisfy us as intelligence officers, but it doesn't satisfy the needs of policy. I mentioned a while ago that before we embark upon an estimate we ought to have some idea of the scope, the requirements, of these people. It does no good to turn out an estimate on a situation in Iran for six months if the policy makers are trying to devise a policy for the next 2 years. Or if they're working on a policy on the Middle East, its not much of a contribution if we turn out separate estimates on Egypt, Iran, and Israel, and don't consider the rest of the area. Now those estimates might be fine pieces of intelligence, they might have value some place, sometime, but they are not keyed, you see, to the needs of the moment. It's not only a matter of time and space, its also a matter of taking up the questions that they are considering as policy questions. We may really not quite hit the policy or hit the questions that they are interested in at all but talk about other things that have only a marginal interest to them at the time. Well, I put all those under the heading of alertness to the needs of policy makers: the development of close working relationships, organizing to meet the needs of

these people; and attempting to answer the questions that they're interested in at the time.

The second thing I think we can do, next to alertness, is to confine ourselves rigidly to intelligence. It's sometimes very difficult for the intelligence officer not to break over just a little into the policy making field. He sometimes lives with these situations so closely, he becomes so absorbed in them, that he feels that he just must tell the policy maker what he should do in order to clear it all up in the interests of our security. Some time ago there was an officer appointed in the agency, an officer with many qualifications but relatively little experience at the time in intelligence work, a memorandum was presented to him on a situation that was to go up to the director. He read it, thought it was a useful memorandum, and wanted to add a paragraph at the bottom though, that in view of the above the U. S. Govt. should do the following. Well, it was it pointed out to him that that's just not our job. We don't make recommendations on policy. We present the situation; then it's up to the policy makers to devise a policy that is realistic in the terms of that situation. There's a very good reason why we should stay out of the policy field. And that reason is that we have only part of the picture. There's a great deal more to it than we present in our intelligence estimates. There's the whole domestic side; what are our resources and capabilities? We don't know. The members of the NSC and the President have to get from the Joint Chiefs of Staff an estimate of our military capabilities at the moment. We can't provide that. So if an intelligence officer were to add in a very simple fashion, "well this could all be resolved if the U. S. would station 2 divisions in Patagonia", that's no help, you see, because we don't know whether there are 2 division abailable. Or whether we need that at the time. And then there are many other facets

to policy, even foreign policy, that we know about. Take a decision in the field of economic warfare. We may make an estimate saying that the continual exportation of certain articles to some countries behind the Iron Curtain is very inimical to our security interests, and we might say that it's essential that this traffic be cut off. There may be other angles to that than we know about. There may be deals by which we're getting things back that are more important than what we're losing. The policy makers may have a longer and broader perspective than we can have from the intelligence point of view. So we must confine ourselves to estimating the situation from an intelligence officer's viewpoint and not trying to second guess the policy makers.

In conclusion, I would just like to comment a little bit on the use that is made of intelligence. How much use is made of it? Is it really put to good use by these high officers of our government? Well it's something that can't be answered categorically. Every member of the NSC goes into his meeting with a briefing book. He has the papers that the Council is going to consider in his book. He has along with him the relevant National Intelligence estimates. I think almost invariably they've read them. If they haven't read them somebody on their staffs has read them, and they've been briefed about them. Certainly they've had the conclusions drawn to their attention. It's not uncommon to see a member of the Planning Board read a paragraph out of one of these estimates as some subject is being discussed. They are cited a number of times in discussions in these meetings. Besides this sort of thing you can put your finger on, I'm sure a great deal of the intelligence that's produced goes into the mental equipment of these officers. It helps form their background information. They carry that along with them

and it forms part of their material when they discuss these matters in Council.

It is rather unusual for an estimate to appear verbatim in any policy document even when there is a recital of certain facts upon which policy is going to be based. It does appear very often, at least in part, in the staff studies that accompany NSC papers. An NSC paper consists first of a statement of the problem: what it is that's going to be decided. The problem may be very simply stated; as: to recommend a policy for the U.S. in Southeast Asia ; or: to recommend a policy for the US in Egypt, or some other area of the world. The statement of the problem is followed usually by a sort of preamble which is a recital of the reasons why we need a policy. It's usually just a few sentences. In the case of Iran, it will point out the important geographic position of that area, the important natural resources, principally the oil, point out the effects upon the other countries if Iran were to be lost to the free world: various matters of that kind. Then there's a statement of recommended policy and it begins "U.S.Government should: 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6, whatever number of points are necessary to cover the policy. Sometimes these recommended actions are preceded by conditions. The U. S. Government should, if country X were to fall under Communist domination, do the following things: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. The U. S. Govt. should, if country X should form an alliance with country Y to our detriment, do 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc. And then at the bottom of the paper there's an assignment of responsibility for carrying out the policy and that is usually to the Secretary of State with the assistance of other members of the NSC and their agencies. Sometimes it is the joint responsibility of the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense.

Well, then, accompanying this policy statement (which is rarely more than a page or two in length) there is a staff study which is partly an intelligence

document and partly a document of argumentation as to why the policy is being adopted. It's included with the policy statement so that people at the lower levels of these departments who are really going to have to carry out the policy have some idea of the reasons that cause this policy to be adopted. Something of the intelligence background that prompted it some of the reasons why a certain policy was chosen over another policy. And into, that, as I say, a great deal of intelligence goes. Sometimes our national intelligence estimates are cribbed in wholesale fashion to produce these staff studies.